

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 DHA-02 TRSE-00 /060 W  
-----140158Z 119439 /70

R 131834Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8279  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 08350

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, GW, FR, IT  
SUBJECT: CDU KOHL'S CURRENT OUTLOOK

SUMMARY: FRG OPPOSITION LEADER, HELMUT KOHL, HAS CONFIRMED TO US HIS PLANS TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES LATER THIS YEAR AS WELL AS HIS GROWING CONFIDENCE THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNING COALITION HERE WILL NOT LAST, AND HAS EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN ABOUT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN FRANCE AND ITALY. END SUMMARY

1. HELMUT KOHL SAID THE FOLLOWING TODAY DURING A CONVERSATION WITH US EMBASSY OFFICERS:

--HE IS PLANNING FOR A VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES LATER THIS YEAR, THOUGH HE WOULD NOT WISH TO COME BEFORE CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S VISIT IN JULY.

--HE IS INCREASINGLY CONFIDENT THAT THE SPD COALITION WILL NOT LAST. IN ALL RECENT GERMAN POLITICAL HISTORY, NO COALITION HAS BEEN ABLE TO

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PREVAIL AGAINST A PLURALITY PARTY WHICH HAD GAINED IN PREVIOUS ELECTIONS.

--HE BELIEVES SCHMIDT'S ATTITUDE OF CONTEMPT AND SCORN FOR OTHERS DURING EARLIER YEARS IS NOW COMING BACK TO HAUNT SCHMIDT. SCHMIDT HAS NO SUPPORT AND NO SYMPATHY ANYWHERE IN THE PARTY DURING HIS TIMES OF TROUBLE.

--THE FDP IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF THE GERMAN BODY POLITIC AND IT IS POINTLESS TO TRY, BY CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION OR OTHERWISE, TO DISPOSE OF IT. HOWEVER, BY NEXT YEAR--PARTICULARLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE HESSE ELECTION--HE PLANS TO MOVE AGAINST THE FDP MUCH MORE VIGOROUSLY IF IT HAS NOT BY THEN INDICATED ITS READINESS TO MOVE INTO COALITION WITH THE CDU.

--IN GENERAL, THERE SEEMS TO BE A CONSERVATIVE TREND IN MANY EUROPEAN COUNTRIES (E.G., GREAT BRITAIN AND THE NETHERLANDS). THIS HELPS THE CDU HERE.

--ON THE OTHER HAND, DEVELOPMENTS IN FRANCE AND ITALY ARE VERY WORRISOME. THE SITUATION IN FRANCE COULD BE VERY GRAVE IF A LEFT-WING MAJORITY EMERGED IN NEXT YEAR'S ELECTION.

--DEVELOPMENTS IN ITALY ARE ALSO WORRISOME, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS LESS THAN IN FRANCE BECAUSE THE ITALIANS APPEAR TO HAVE A GREAT CAPACITY FOR MUDDLING THROUGH. NONETHELESS, KOHL PLANS TO GO TO ROME THIS WEEKEND IN ORDER TO TRY TO DISCOURAGE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS FROM GREATER COLLABORATION WITH THE PCI.

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 DHA-02 TRSE-00 /060 W  
-----140159Z 119423 /70

R 131834Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8280  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 08350

2. IN A PERSONAL ASIDE, KOHL SPOKE WARMLY OF FORMER CHANCELLOR LUDWIG ERHARD WHO PASSED AWAY LAST WEEK. HE SAID ERHARD HAD RECENTLY CONGRATULATED HIM ON HAVING AGAIN CREATED UNITY WITHIN THE CDU. KOHL OBVIOUSLY FELT THAT THIS WAS A PROFOUND TRIBUTE FROM A MAN WHO HAD FOR MANY YEARS BEEN AT ODDS WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY.

3. COMMENT: KOHL'S OBSERVATIONS, AS ALWAYS, REVEAL AS MUCH ABOUT HIM AS THEY DO ABOUT THE POLITICAL SITUATION HE DESCRIBES. NONETHELESS, HIS CONCERNS ABOUT FRANCE AND ITALY APPEAR GENUINE, THOUGH MANY POLITICAL OBSERVERS HERE BELIEVE THAT A MOVE TO THE LEFT IN THOSE COUNTRIES WOULD CREATE A BACKLASH IN GERMANY WHICH WOULD HELP KOHL AND THE OPPOSITION.

4. IN A FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION, FRG FOREIGN OFFICE MINISTERIALDIREKTOR BLECH TOLD US THE GERMANS HAD JUST HEARD THAT MITTERAND WAS VERY ILL. BLECH COULD NOT TELL  
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WHETHER THIS INFORMATION WAS GENUINE OR WAS PLANTED BY MITTERAND'S POLITICAL OPPONENTS, BUT HE SAID THAT IT WOULD SEEM QUESTIONABLE WHETHER THOSE OPPONENTS WOULD PLANT SUCH INFORMATION THIS EARLY BEFORE THE ELECTION.  
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Margaret P. Grafeld  
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